



U.S. Immigration  
and Customs  
Enforcement

August 11, 2005

# News Release

## **3 ALIEN SMUGGLERS SENTENCED FOR HOSTAGE TAKING**

*Smugglers get lengthy prison sentences, others still awaiting sentencing*

HOUSTON — Three alien smugglers were sentenced to 14 years in prison in U.S. District Court here Wednesday for hostage taking, following an investigation by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

The charges and ultimate convictions stem from the arrest of five defendants March 11, 2004, after they held hostage a group of 36 illegal aliens at gunpoint while inside the GNW Stereo Car Shop located in the 9600 block of Bissonnet.

Sentenced to 14 years in prison are William Calderon-Lopez, 26, from El Salvador, and Juan Carlos Martinez-Ordonez, 28, and Victor Victoria Victoria-Magdaleno, 29, both from Mexico.

Also arrested in March 2004 was Zabdiel Hernandez-Bonilla, 19, and Armando Gaona, 30, both from Mexico, and Rafael Rivas-Lopez, 29, from El Salvador. All were arrested by the Houston Police Department (HPD) officers responding to a call alleging dozens of illegal aliens were being held at gunpoint at the car shop.

ICE agents took custody from HPD of the defendants and the 36 smuggled aliens. Some of the smuggled aliens attempted to escape by crawling through the rafters inside the building, but ultimately fell through the ceiling into stores next door.

During a two-week court trial, evidence presented by the government identified Victor Victoria-Magdaleno as the person who walked the smuggled illegal aliens through the brush near Roma, Texas, and then arranged to drive them to Houston and drop them off at GNW Car Stereo shop. He acted as a “boss” and made sure the aliens didn’t leave the property.

Armando Gaona, 30, a Mexican national, also was described by many of the illegal aliens as the boss, and as the individual responsible for beating a smuggled alien unconscious for failing to pay an additional \$2,000 smuggling fee.

William Calderon-Lopez, the manager at GNW Stereo Car Shop housed the illegal aliens at the store until relatives paid their smuggling fees. He also acted as a guard.

Zabdiel Hernandez-Bonilla, 19, a Mexican national, was sentenced to 108 months in prison June 2004. He was also responsible for guarding the aliens and for keeping ledger books and lists of names.

Rafael Rivas-Lopez, 29, from El Salvador, was also responsible for guarding the hostage aliens and coordinating the smuggling fee payments with the relatives of the smuggled aliens.

“We are constantly reminded of the callous use of force and threats smugglers employ against their victims,” said Bob Rutt, ICE’s special agent-in-charge. “We will continue to use every available tool to bring these smugglers to justice.”

All 36 illegal aliens taken into custody that day have been returned to their countries of origin.

Armando Gaona and Rafael Rivas-Lopez are scheduled to be sentenced in September.

# ICE #

*U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of five integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.*